WASHTENAW COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY - Founded December 17, 1857 MAY 1993

WASHTENAW IMPRESSIONS

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

DATES TO REMEMBER: MAY 19 POTLUCK, JUNE 19 BUS TOUR TO LANSING, ART FAIR PARKING JULY 21-24

With this issue of *Washtenaw Impressions* the Washtenaw County Historical Society winds down its 1992-1993 season; the next *Impressions* will be mailed in September, 1993.

The Society will have events in May, June and July. On Wednesday, May 19 we will meet at the Cobblestone Farm Barn for our ANNUAL MEETING with a supper pot luck and election of officers for 1993-1994.

Please bring a main dish, salad or dessert. We would like to have you sign up so we know how many tables to set up—BUT do NOT stay away if, at the last minute you find you can come, because you did not send or call-in a reservation—we will make room for all.

All are invited. After supper we will be treated to a slide show by Ted Ligibel, from the Preservation Program at Eastern Michigan University, and Steven Jones will also show slides of the state capitol building as it was being renovated — a prelude to the: ANNUAL BUS TOUR on Saturday, June 19.. The cost for the trip, including lunch, is $25 per person.

There is room for 47 passengers. Reservations may be made by sending a check to WCHS JUNE BUS TOUR, P O Box 3336, Ann Arbor, MI 48106-3336.

Because we can only accommodate 47, we must have your check to reserve your place on the bus.

The final Society activity will be during the July Art Fair, July 21-24 for which the Society is seeking volunteers to PARK CARS from 5:00 to 8:30 p.m Wednesday, Thursday and Friday and Saturday, 8:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. THIS IS ONE OF OUR MAJOR FUNDRAISING EFFORTS.

We will also have a booth in the non-

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KAREN'S COLUMN

WCHS BENEFITS FROM HELP OF HISTORIC RENOVATION SPECIALISTS; NOW MUST APPLY FOR CODE VARIANCES

It's a pleasure to enjoy some spring weather and look forward to the installation of the ornamental picket fence in front of the Museum.

Again, I would like to put in a plea for contributions for the following projects. The suggested amount is $200 for:

1. Painting front and rear porches, railings and pickets.
2. Lettering signs for the Museum.
3. Painting the east facade.
4. Purchasing a book to be displayed in the Museum listing donor's names.

If you can help with any of these, please call WCHS at 662-9092. Or better yet, mail a check to WCHS, PO Box 3336, Ann Arbor, MI 48106-3336.

Activity now will focus on gathering information needed to apply to both state and local governments for necessary barrier-free and building code variances.

These must be obtained before we can apply for building permits to do further interior work. Gary Cooper, of Quinn-Evans Architects, will bear most of this burden, preparing the documents and drawings for the next scope of work.

Quinn-Evans specialty is renovation of historic structures. In fact, they did part of the renovation of the Michigan State Capitol which WCHS will visit June 19. Luckily for us, they are right here in Ann Arbor. Their expertise is considerable.

We are so grateful for their generous contributions of time and effort. Without Gary Cooper and Quinn-Evans, we might still be staring at a slightly dilapidated house sitting over a hole, instead of a carefully renovated structure settling in gracefully on a prominent downtown corner!

Karen O'Neal
665-2242

ANNUAL MEETING SET AT COBBLESTONE FARM BARN

WCHS's annual potluck dinner meeting and election of officers will be held Wednesday, May 19, in the new Cobblestone Farm Barn (visitor's center),2781 Packard Road, Ann Arbor. Please park in the Buhr lot, immediately adjacent to the barn.

Dinner will be served at 6:15 p.m. The meeting and program will follow. Attendees are invited to gather at 5:30 p.m. for a social period. See President's column for more details.

RESTORED CAPITOL, DEPOT, MANSION ON BUS TOUR TO LANSING JUNE 19

Don't forget the annual bus tour Saturday, June 19 , to Lansing to visit the newly restored state capitol building.

The tour will also include lunch at Clara's in a restored railroad depot, a visit to the historic Turner-Dodge mansion and a riding tour around Lansing. A local guide will board the bus for the latter.

The Turner-Dodge house, on the National Register of Historic Places was built 1853-58 for an early Lansing merchant and civic leader, James Turner. Turner's daughter, Abby, married Frank L. Dodge, an attorney who served in the Michigan House of Representatives. The Dodges bought the house from her mother. In 1900-06 the house was enlarged and re-designed.

See more details in President's column.

TV-VCR DRIVE AT 66%

WCHS has collected 22,007 Bill Knapp's Restaurant points or 66 percent of the 33,283 needed to earn a TV-VCR combination.

Anyone who eats at Knapp's may request a yellow points slip from the cashier each time with one point given for each dollar spent. Since the April *Impressions* report, 880 points were turned in.

Thanks and please keep collecting all summer and send or give to Alice Ziegler, 537 Riverview Drive, Ann Arbor, MI 48104.

ANN ARBOR'S OLD WEST SIDE:

COMMUNITY WITH A GERMAN HERITAGE

Ann Arbor's Old West Side was settled by German immigrants, people not just from Germany but from a certain part of Germany, Grace Shackman, WCHS April speaker said.

With few exceptions they were Swabians from Wurttemberg in southwest Germany. They shared language, food, religion. They had large families and many intermarried. Descendants are still around today. It was a real community.

"That is one reason I'm able to research as much as I do. I get a lot more first-hand information from descendants than you might be able to where people dispersed more."

While the Old West Side as a historic district and neighborhood has defined boundaries, she did not confine her slide talk to those blocks west of Main Street but traced the history of German settlement in the Ann Arbor area.

"The first people in the area and in the Old West Side were, of course, Indians. They were here for 11 or 12 centuries before any white people came. It's not fair to leave them out, but they are hard to research because they didn't leave written records or many physical remains.

"But Liberty Street was an Indian path and people have told me they found arrowheads by Allen Creek before it was put in a pipe about 1926.

"About ten years ago some Boy Scouts found an artifact in Eberwhite Woods. They took it to University of Michigan anthropologists who said it was from a tribe in the Florida area with whom local Indians evidently traded."

She found a 1908 newspaper clipping at Bentley Library about a large old tree in David Allmendinger's yard being cut down (so his son-in-law, William Murray, could build his house, she later found).

"Neighbors were upset about cutting the tree because it was a large, beautiful old tree and they said the Indians had camped under it. It took three days to cut the tree down it was so big.

"When studying history in school, they tell you about the first this and first that," she continued. "When you study local history it doesn't always seem that clear. There are several people who claim to be the first German in Ann Arbor.

"Conrad Bissinger was first to set foot in Ann Arbor. He came in 1825, a year after the town started. He was a baker from Baden near the Black Forest. (Baden is now part of the same state as Swabia.)

Photos courtesy of Grace Shackman

1890 ALLMENDINGER HOUSE, 719 WEST WASHINGTON

Tree (left) cut down 1908 to make way for Allmendinger son-in-law, Judge Murray's house.

"But there were just a handful of houses in Ann Arbor and it couldn't support a baker then so he went to Charleston, South Carolina, to work. He saved his money and came back in 1832 to buy land here.

"Daniel Allmendinger also came in 1825, looked around, liked what he saw, then went back to his family in Dansville, New York.

"Jonathan Mann is sometimes called the first German in Ann Arbor because he stayed, but he came with two other families who should also be given that honor.

"A tanner, Mann came from Germany in 1824 and worked in New York, then Mexico awhile, and then came back to Reading, Pennsylvania. He sent for his family and was looking for a place to settle.

"He heard about Michigan and decided he would like to look at it. He was told Daniel Allmendinger up in Dansville, New York, knew all about Michigan and that he should talk to him.

"Mann left on foot but found when he got there that Allmendinger had just left for Michigan. Mann convinced another man in town named Schil-ling, who was thinking of going to Michigan, to go with him. They left on foot for Buffalo to catch a boat on Lake Erie. They ran into Allmen-dinger there and the three of them took the boat to Detroit. They walked to Ann Arbor.

"Mann bought a lot at First and Washington for a house and tannery business. The business was where the Ann Arbor Railroad is now.

"Allmendinger bought a farm (now the Westgate Shopping Center area) and Schilling bought farther out on Park Road. She showed a picture of the Allmendinger farm house built in 1841 at Westgate. The Bissinger house still stands at 719 West Washington Street.

"Probably all those people wrote back to Germany and told how well they liked it here but Mann wrote a particularly famous letter to a relative named Josenhans and spoke about how wonderful Ann Arbor was. Josenhans circulated this letter all over and this got everyone else coming.

"In a few years there were 25 or 30 German families in Ann Arbor or on farms to the west in Scio and Lodi. By 1832 there were enough to justify having their own church so they asked Mann to write another letter to Josenhans, who was on the board of directors of the Basel Seminary in Switzerland right below Swabia.

"They sent Friedrich Schmid, a very remarkable man from all I can read. He trained as a blacksmith in early life but then went to the seminary. His dream was to be a missionary in China or Africa but, instead, he was sent to Michigan to preach to other Germans—I guess in those days you didn't argue, you just did it.

"For a few years, he managed to have a little mission in Sebawaing in the Bay City area that ministered to

Mr. & Mrs. Jonathan Henry Mann were among the first Germans in Ann Arbor to come and stay in 1830.

First German Assembly House built 1833 in what is now Bethlehem Cemetery on Jackson Road. Torn down in 1880s.

Indians, but basically he ministered to Germans who wanted to hear preaching in German.

"Because of the way he came, there are four churches that claim to be the first German church in Michigan. He was definitely the first German Protestant minister in Michigan.

"When he landed in Detroit, a bunch of Germans met him and asked him to preach to them. He did and they later became St. John's Lutheran Church. The Detroit people begged him to stay but he came on to Ann Arbor because they had sent for him.

"He went to Mann's and was warmly greeted by the Ann Arbor German community. He gave his first Ann Arbor area sermon in the one-room Sullivan School out Jackson Road.

"Salem Evangelical Lutheran Church on Scio Church Road later evolved from that so they claim they were the first German church."

She showed pictures of the first church building, a simple wooden structure built in what is now Bethlehem Cemetery in 1833 on land given by Allmendinger. "It cost $200 or more—that was a lot of money for that community. Some of it came from Germany, some from Philadelphia."

"When they tore down the first church in the 1880s, some people evidently saved pieces of board and made things out of them. It would be fun to find some of them some day." A boulder with a plaque now marks the site in Bethlehem Cemetery.

"Schmid actually had two churches out in the country for a while. He married Mann's daughter a year after he got here and Mann gave him , as a wedding present, a house out in the country in Lodi township across from Salem Church. He would preach at Salem every Sunday and also at the one where Bethlehem Cemetery is now.

"In addition to that he went all over southeast Michigan where people begged him to come. He went on foot for six years until he was given a horse by somebody who was leaving. He went as far north as Saginaw, as far south as Monroe, as far west as Allegan and east to Detroit.

"The official record says he started 20 churches. I think he started more than that. Any church that was founded in that era, he would have been the first person to preach there.

"When he was back here, he was more than a preacher. If a doctor wasn't available, they would call him. If there was a dispute, he was the one people would come to. Evidently his wife spoke a lot better English than he did, so she was often the translator.

"He led a very, very busy life. His whole family was brought into the work too. His father immigrated over here after a few years. His father knew a lot about herbal medicine so he helped with some of the doctoring and even some of the preaching.

"People were always staying in the house. There was a memoir written by a son where he said, at times, our house resembled a hotel except that the guests didn't have to pay.

"Mann's descendant said similar things. Evidently Mann's house was always full of people coming to this country. They would stay and, even though he didn't have a whole lot of money, he would feed them. In later years, they paid him back many times. If they farmed, they would give him farm products. It seemed like a very supportive community.

"By 1839, as Ann Arbor kept growing, people in the city didn't like going way out in the country to church, which they thought going out to the Bethlehem Cemetery site was. For a while, Schmid came into town every other week and preached in various meeting spaces.

"In 1844, the church moved into town. A church was built in 1845 kitty-corner from Mann's house at First and Washington. The Mann house was where Kiwanis is now and the church where the parking lot is.

"Schmid himself moved into town and lived on Main Street after 1845. His house was where the empty lots are now for the Estelle Schneider project. (400 block of South Main near Packard).

"After the Schmids moved into town, he would go out in the country sometimes to preach, but it got to be less and less. Eventually the country church was just used for weddings and funerals.

"The same year the Ann Arbor church was built, the Old West Side was laid out by William Maynard, a business man and one of the group of men who donated land for the University of Michigan.

"An 1874 map shows the Old West Side area laid out in three additions to the city. It shows German Turner Park and Relief Fire Company Park south of Madison between Fourth and Sixth Streets. A lot of people think the German parks were where Wurster Park is today but they were just west."

She showed a picture of William Maynard's house which later became the Elk's Club and more recently was the Ann Arbor Civic Theater headquarters before it was torn down. It is now a parking lot. "In it's heyday, it was a real beauty spot of the town."

"West of the Old West Side was Eber White's farm. His house was at the corner of Eberwhite and Liberty. He was a New Yorker, not a German.

"I put in a picture of the Old West Side area as seen from the old Courthouse tower because you can see how empty it was. Even though it was laid out in 1845 and two more installments, it wasn't settled lot by lot as in subdivisions today.

"When I research homes for the Old West Side house tour, I often find that

whole families lived near each other. I think a family could buy a house and later, when the kids were ready, they could use the empty lot next door. When a relative came from Germany, they could build around the corner.

"Another thing that influenced how it was settled was Allen's Creek which ran through the old west side. The higher land along Liberty and Huron, the main streets, was settled first, then the side streets got filled in.

"Mulholland Street used to dead end at Allen's Creek. There was a cement wall so cars couldn't go into the creek right below. After they put the creek in a pipe, they extended the street.

"There was a lot of music in the old west side community—the Germans were very big in music." She showed the *Washtenaw Times* band and noted there were Otto's, Staebler's and others."

Ms. Shackman showed a picture (exterior) of a former bowling alley for German park, now a house.

"The earliest and best known German society is the Schwaben but there were quite a few others. The Schwaben Hall is on Ashley. It's supposedly for insurance but it's a lot more than that—fellowship, health and so on."

"Other aspects of German culture were food, German language newspapers and, of course, education is important. When the Ann Arbor church was built in 1845, they started a school in the basement with German language instruction in all subjects, not just church subjects.

"In 1860 they built a school on First Street with all grades up to eighth. They continued teaching in German until World War I. If it hadn't ended then, it soon would have ended anyway because they started teaching more and more in English. People who wanted it all in German said they were teaching too much in English but people who wanted their children to be more of a success in America wanted more in English."

"Three houses now stand on the school site. A woman named Lucille Zemke told me her dad bought the school. He built the first house on the playground and moved his family in. He built the other two houses and used the stone from the school foundation for porches. He used a door from the school on one house.

"Zion Lutheran Church also had a parochial school, though not as long term. It was just junior high and they taught in English. The church then was where Comerica Bank is now at Fifth Avenue and Washington Street. The school met in a building behind it which is where the telephone company is now. The school was accredited so that pupils could go on to high school.

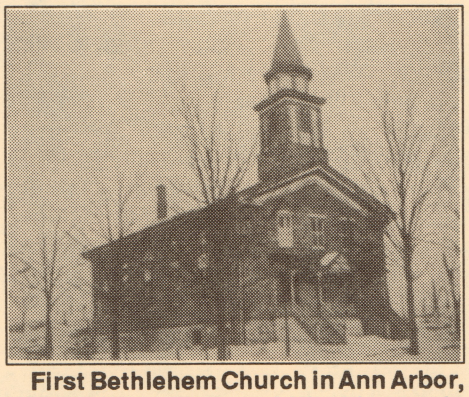
Local Germans were big on music. This was one of several German bands of earlier days.

"Bach School, a public school, was started in the neighborhood in 1858. Even though it was a public school, it had mainly German teachers which must have been more than a coincidence. The school board must have assigned them there.

"People who went there told me they always knew what church their teachers went to. They would go to Bethlehem or Zion and if they didn't go to their church they went to the other one.

"Bach School was called the Second Ward School originally. Ann Arbor was divided into wards as it is now but the ward boundaries stayed the same much longer than now. Each ward had a school.

"It was renamed Bach School after Philip Bach died. Bach was one of the Germans who assimilated faster than a lot of the Germans. In the early days of this town, it was English people from the East Coast who ran the town.



First Bethlehem Church in Ann Arbor, built 1845 at First and Washington in what is now a parking lot.

"Philip Bach married an English woman, Anna Botsford, whose family lived out in the Geddes area. He was mayor and on the school board. He was well known and it made sense that his name should be given to the German school.

"Bach's house was on Main Street near Packard not far from Maynard's

"Now comes the big schism between Zion and Bethlehem Churches. In 1871 Schmid had been there for 38 years. I think he was ready to retire. His health was not as it should be. Pastor Hermann Reuther was called, also from the Basel Seminary.

"After he came the church was filled to overflowing. Maybe this was because, even though Schmid was so wonderful and they all loved him, by then everybody must have known what he was going to say.

"Here was somebody new preaching. The congregation got too big for the church so they said we've got to build a new church. The had a subscription drive and everybody was supposed to give money. Some who didn't were kicked out.

"They formed Zion Lutheran Church. It sort of begs the question why they didn't give money. It wasn't that they couldn't. Schmid was one of the people who left.

"There are lots of explanations. Pastor Willimann of Bethlehem Church thinks it was jealousy—Schmid didn't like it that Reuther was getting so many people to his service.

"There's a paper I read at Bentley Library that has a theory that the upwardly mobile Germans went to Zion. After a time in Zion a lot of them even went on to English churches.

"My opinion is that if it hadn't happened then, it would have happened fairly soon. In the early years, just being Protestant and German, you were in one church. But as it got to be a bigger group there could be more theological differences.

"They split into Zion Lutheran and Bethlehem Church which became a United Church of Christ. I'm no theologian but I know Zion is closer to Catholicism. The Lutherans were the

first church to break off from Catholicism. You might say it's more 'high church' and Bethlehem is more liberal, whatever that means.

"Of other churches Schmid started, some are Lutheran , some are United Church of Christ. I don't know why congregations chose one or the other but that is the case.

"The early church in what is now Bethlehem Cemetery was called Zion, so when this group left and said they were Zion Church, they said they were the original, so that is the fourth church that can say they were the first in Michigan."

Twenty years later, Bethlehem did get a new church on Fourth Avenue between William and Packard. She showed a 1930s picture of the church taken before more recent additions.

The first German church building in Ann Arbor at First and Washington was later used by Mack & Company department store to house horses they used to make deliveries.

Still later Mayor William E. Brown, Jr., had a car dealership there and the church building was torn down to make more room for cars. It is now a parking lot.

"Two other churches are important to the history of the Old West Side. First, the German Methodist Church was formed in 1847. There were other German Methodist Churches in Ohio that sent someone up to Ann Arbor to form one.

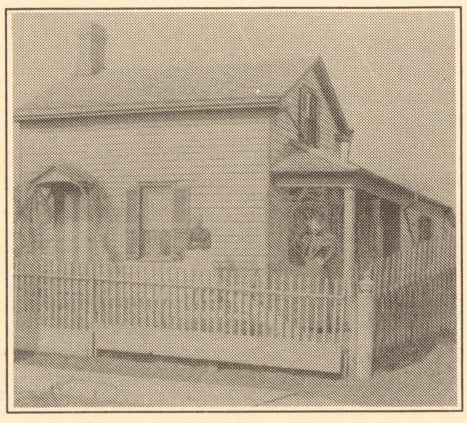
"Interestingly, Daniel Allmendinger was one of their founders. He was the man who gave land for the first German church in Bethlehem Cemetery. He left and joined this new church. One hint I have is that his wife died and he married a second wife. I wonder if she was a Methodist.

"Their first church was on the [northwest] corner of Division and Liberty but in 1897 they built the church at West Jefferson and Fourth Streets. Now the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints is in it. They love it and keep it up nicely.

"The German Methodists now call themselves the West Side Methodists. Their church is on South Seventh Street.

"The other West Side German church is St. Paul's Lutheran. In 1908 some University students who were members of the Missouri Synod Lutheran Church wrote to their headquarters and asked for a church in Ann Arbor.

"The officials decided Ann Arbor could support a church and the best place would be the west side because that's



'Cabin house,' ca. 1850, 626 West Liberty, now restored.

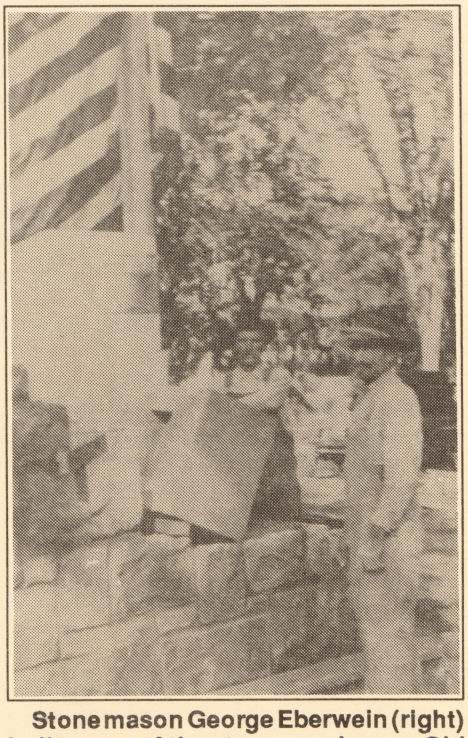
where the Germans were.

"At first they met in a little church at Chapin and Huron. They bought the former Henry Krause home at Third and Liberty and used it as half parsonage and half school. St. Paul's had a school long after Bethlehem and Zion no longer had their schools.

"In the 1930s St. Paul's tore down the Krause house and built the present Tudor style church. The church seemed to appeal more to recent immigrants.

("Krause had been a tanner as well as Mann. In the early days there were at one time six tanneries in Ann Arbor.)

"What did these people do besides go to church and school? They had to make a living, obviously. Mostly they were craftsmen if they were not farmers. They were usually trained in Germany and very good at what they did.



Stonemason George Eberwein (right) built many of the stone porches on Old West Side houses. Co-worker Chris Sager on left.

"The very first thing I researched were the porches. All over the west side are porches with stone walls with designs. The designs are subtle but you can see a round stone and others coming out from it like sun rays or a sunflower.

"People know that a man named George Eberwein did them. There are a lot of things in the Old West Side that everybody knew but nobody had written down. Some even knew who his daughter was and where she lived. I called her and she gave me a picture of her dad."

"Harry Koch's father and two uncles had Koch Construction Company. They built a lot of buildings all over Ann Arbor." Ms. Shackman showed pictures of Koch's home and a construction scene at Alumni Memorial Hall (U-M Art Museum) which Koch Brothers built.

The one-time Keck Furniture Factory at Fourth and William is now used for offices. She showed exterior and interior views. The 1870s style house of brewery owner Peter Brehm is today The Moveable Feast restaurant and catering business.

"David Allmendinger, who had the organ factory, started making organs upstairs in his house. His father-in-law had taught him how. He kept expanding. His factory at Fourth and Washington is still there.

"Allmendinger made pianos too. He did very well for a while when everybody had to have a piano or organ to make their own music. After people had record players they could listen to other people make music."

She showed a picture of Beverly Pooley playing an Ann Arbor Organ. "There's one at Kempf House [which is owned by WCHS} and other people have them.

"The David Allmendinger house is still there on Washington Street. His granddaughter, Dorothy Wagner, lived there until she died, I think in the last year."

She loaned Grace pictures of the house with a horse and buggy in front and of the back yard. "Allen Creek ran behind the house. They dammed it up and had goldfish ponds. They had beautiful gardens and a gazebo. It was quite a showplace."

"William Murray, probate judge, who married David Allmendinger's daughter, Julia, was Mrs. Wagner's father.

"Judge Murray's house, on Washington between Murray and Mulholland, the

one they cut down the tree for, has been on the Old West Side homes tour a couple of times. Murray laid out the two side streets , the first named for himself, and the other for the farm it was on.

"Another business was the flour mill, now Ann Arbor Implement [210 South First]. The flour mill sign is still visible up on the side of the building. The Blind Pig night club was part of the mill.

"The milling business was owned by Frank Allmendinger and a Schneider. Frank did the bookkeeping and business end and he lived in the former American Legion [1035 South Main] which I think will be torn down soon. Frank's wife was Pauline—that's why Pauline Street runs right into it.

"The hands-on partner, the miller, was a Mr. Schneider who lived about two houses up from The Moveable Feast.

"When I first started researching, I had a wonderful source of information, a man named Arthur Reiff, who seemed to have a perfect memory for everything.

"He remembered being at the mill as a boy. I called him when I was doing an article on the mill and was telling him about Schneider. He said, 'No, no, it was Mr. Miller.' He remembered him in overalls with flour all over him and he was positive it was Mr. Miller, while I had written documentation that it was Schneider.

"About a half-hour later, he called back and said he had figured it out. It was Mr. Miller Schneider. There were two Schneiders in the community so they called this one Miller Schneider to differentiate him from the other one.

"Another business was the carriage factory. Christian Walker was the main owner but there were a Grossman and Brown who were co-owners.

"Mr. Brown's son told me the carriages were made from scratch. They had a blacksmith shop in back where they made the wheels and metal part. They had a carpenter shop where they made wood seats and a place where they did upholstery and painted them.

"Each one was custom-made. You went in and ordered it, telling them what size and color. Today the carriage factory is the Ann Arbor Art Association headquarters on West Liberty.

"They, of course, folded when cars came in. They tried to hold on. They did a little bit of car work but didn't make it, unlike Studebaker which did make it into the car business.

"People from the farms west of Ann Arbor came into town and started businesses. A prime example was the Staebler family. Frederick Staebler came in the first wave of immigrants shortly after Mann and Allmendinger and company. He farmed out on Jackson Road near Farmer Grant's. There is a Staebler Road out there.

Home of Tanner Henry Krause at 420 West Liberty, replaced in 1930s by St. Paul's Lutheran Church

"By 1885, his son, Michael, had inherited the farm and had enough money that he came into town and started in to business.

"Michael built a hotel, first named the Germania, at Washington and Ashley. It was also headquarters for the Germania Association, similar to the Schwaben with even more ideas of helping people get better through physical exercise and betterment of the mind. They were going to have lectures and concerts.

"At first, the hotel was just three stories. The third floor was higher because that was the hall for the Germania Club. Ten years later he added a fourth story and changed it all to hotel rooms. He renamed it the American Hotel.

"Today, the Earle Restaurant is in the basement, the top three floors are law offices. The main floor tenants keep changing. A new cafe is expected to open soon on the corner."

An interior picture of the hotel showed the man who would meet the trains with horse and buggy, college kids who took turns being desk clerks and Michael, himself, behind the bar. "Later, he let his son take over—this was a very common idea to set your son up in business."

An interior of the hotel dining room showed tables with white linen table cloths and waitresses in the long dresses of the day and aprons. Townspeople as well as hotel guests ate there and patronized the saloon.

"The hotel was three storefronts wide on Washington—the one closest to Ashley was the lobby, next the bar and the third, a store. The dining room was behind the lobby with a kitchen between dining room and bar. "

Ms. Shackman said most of her information came from Warren Staebler, a grandson of Michael, who grew up in the hotel.

"In the store, Ed Staebler sold all kinds of things. At first he was selling farm implements because that's what he knew. They sold sewing machines, they sold bicycles because the boys were into bikes. They sold coal.

"Across the street, another son, Fred, ran a grocery store where the Old German Restaurant is today. He was the father of Edith Staebler Kempf. Like the restaurant today, the grocery store building was L-shape. You could enter from Ashley or Washington.

"The Staeblers were the first car sales people in Ann Arbor. The Toledo Steamer they first sold didn't do too well. They lived at Third and Liberty and they couldn't always make it up the hill. They went on to sell other cars and eventually turned it into a real car dealership.

"Right behind the hotel was a little wooden building. They took it down and put up a brick building for their dealership. The Bird of Paradise night club is there now.

"The hotel dining room closed in 1927 and was made into a showroom for cars. When people started driving cars, they needed gasoline. At first they bought it at the curb from Staebler Grocery across the street."

A safer idea was to go into a gas station. The Staebler-Kempf gas station operated out of Philip Bach's house with a new front added.

"Neil Staebler, grandson of Michael and son of Edward Staebler, had the business with Paul Kempf who married Edith Staebler. Neil's father was a mayor of Ann Arbor.

There were lots of other stores operated by Germans who came from farms, she said. Fiegels and the more recent owner of Fiegels, Sager, came from farms.

"Mack & Company was a big department store here before World War II. It started as Mack & Schmid. It occupied several storefronts on Main Street. When Schwaben Hall was built, the two top floors were built for Mack & Company. There was some sort of walkway over the

alley.

The Muehligs were another German family. She showed Fay Muehlig's house on Liberty. It is trimmed with metal scallops that look like wood. Muehlig's had a hardware store and sold tin ceilings that were common in houses of that era.

"There was Bertha Muehlig's, which I can even remember, which was a housewares or dry goods store, and also Muehlig Funeral Chapel, It is the oldest funeral home in the state of Michigan and one of the partners is still a Muehlig."

An Atwater-Kent radio sign could be seen in an interior picture of Schlenker Hardware. Wild & Company mens wear store closed in recent years after going several generations.

She had pictures of the Jefferson Market across from Bach School, one of the small groceries that once dotted the west side, Trubey's house where they had an ice cream business, and two Hunter gas stations, one now Applerose Health Food store, and the Spanish style station on. Huron, now a flower shop.

Other industries included the American Broach factory, Argus Camera, which was a big employer, and a gauge company, King-Seeley, that operated on the Krause tannery site.

After World War II, some homes in the old west side were divided into two units and rented. A few lots were cleared and apartment buildings erected.

Then Art Carpenter, who started Kerrytown, wanted to build a large, block long apartment project on First Street between Jefferson and Madison.

Old and new residents joined in opposition to that and formed the Old West Side Association in 1967. In 1972, the Old West Side became the first entire neighborhood listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Much of the Old West Side is governed by an historic district ordinance. Buildings can't be torn down. Porches can't be filled in unless they already were before the ordinance.

"I know to some people the idea of an historic district ordinance is controversial because people think your home is your castle. But I think it matters to all of us what we see every day and we have rules, such as you can't keep old cars on your front lawn. We have setback rules, rules you just can't let weeds grow. I see this as further extension of that."

Ms. Shackman showed some reminders of the past that still exist in the Old West Side—a hitching post, a carriage step and a number of carriage barns, now used as garages.

At the request of the Reorganized L.D.S. Church, a committee from the Old West Side Association suggested a tri-color scheme for the parsonage to highlight

Old West Side street scene on Mulholland.

detailing, such as its fish scale panel. It is painted cream, beige and brown.

"St. Paul's Church bought two houses behind the church to extend their parking lot and were surprised when told the ordinance does not let you tear down buildings.

"Then they offered to move them but the Historic District Commission refused because the ambience is not the same—it leaves a big empty space.

"Most of their people can park in the Krause Street lot a half block away but they said they still needed more parking for older and handicapped people. A compromise was worked out. They have an exit that goes around the houses so that more people can park behind the church.

"A tailor moved into a house on Liberty and closed in the porch. The association and historic district told him he couldn't. Eventually, he opened the porch.

"One house on Washington near Seventh was in such bad condition that Grace thought they could get permission to tear it down, but they didn't and it has been fixed up nicely."

She ended with pictures of what they call the "cabin house" at 626 Liberty, one of the oldest in the area. The owner's boy friend wanted to tear it down and build a senior citizen high rise with underground parking.

"Some people think the ordinance should be advisory, but, if it was, this house would be gone. It was finally sold to Doug Trubey who started restoring it in 1986.

"The first thing he did was build a red two-story carriage barn in back which I think is just beautiful. Obviously, if you have a house that small, you need a lot of storage space. If he had built a two car garage, it would have ruined the looks.

TRAVELING EXHIBIT GAME OFFERED SCHOOLS, GROUPS

WCHS offers a traveling exhibit of small artifacts set up as a humorous "What is it?" game to schools for children and another for adults. They are available for classes and meetings, subject to volunteer availability. Information: Arlene Schmid, 665-8773.

1904 HIT AND RUN THREW EDITOR FROM BICYCLE

Eugene J. Helber, editor and proprietor of the *Washtenaw Post* (a German language newspaper) was the victim of what proved quite a severe accident this afternoon about 2 o'clock when he was run down by an auto at the corner of Main and Washington Streets near Wadhams, Ryan and Reule's (store), according to the *Ann Arbor Daily Times*, June 1, 1904.

The article said the editor was thrown from his bicycle and injured and it was a hit and run accident by a car from Ypsilanti. The next day the *Ann Arbor Argus* reported that Editor Helber received a letter from Prof. E. A. Lyman of Ypsilanti, one of the occupants of the auto in the accident, saying he regretted greatly that the accident occurred. But it seemed to be his position that Helber was to blame.

RIVERFEST EVENTS SET

Huron RIVERfest '93, a celebration of river communities and ideas, will take place May 14-22, with events in Washtenaw County May 17-19, all sponsored by the Huron River Watershed Council.

Local events are planned at Hudson Mills Metropark Monday evening the 17th, mid-day at Dexter and evening at Ann Arbor, Tuesday, the 18th, and at Parker Mill mid-day and Riverside Park, Ypsilanti, evening of 19th.

HOW TO JOIN, DONATE

Send name, address and phone number with check or money order payable to Washtenaw County Historical Society to: WCHS, c/o Patty Creal, Treasurer, Box 3336, Ann Arbor, MI 48106-3336.

Annual dues are: students, seniors (age 60+) $10; senior couple (one 60+) $19; individual, $15; family/couple, $25; patron $100; association/business $50. Information: 662-9092.

Donations gratefully received to help make our museum a reality. If you combine a donation and membership on one check please indicate amount intended as donation to help keep books straight.

EARLY 20TH CENTURY RENTSCHLER GLASS NEGATIVES PRINTED AT WCC; TO BE DISPLAYED AT MAY 19 MEETING

The 100 or so glass negatives donated to WCHS by Bob Lyons and Karl Lagler have been printed by Mr. Terry Abrams's photography students at Washtenaw Community College. They are portraits of local residents photographed before 1913 at the Rentschler Studio in Ann Arbor. (They look as if they may have been taken 10 to 20 years earlier.)

The images are startling. Because they are newly printed, they look contemporary yet they reveal fashions and details of another era. Patty Creal is working to attach names to those whose identities are known. They will be displayed at the annual meeting May 19.

Two students were involved in printing—Salim Kai and Kathleen Cooley. Kathleen accomplished the bulk of it, Abrams said. It must have taken many hours of careful work. Thank you to all who had a hand in the project.

GARDEN WALK JUNE 19 TO BENEFIT NEW CENTER

The third annual Garden Walk will be held from 11 a.m.-5 p.m. Saturday, June 19, 1993, featuring four landscapes including the 1848 Baldwin house at Hill and Washtenaw .

Proceeds will provide landscaping for the NEW Center on North Main, an office building for non-profit organizations. The walk is sponsored by the Ann Arbor Branch of the Woman's National Farm and Garden Association The first walk provided landscaping funds for WCHS's Museum on Main Street. Information: 665-0389.

Other gardens on the tour are described as "a floral embroidery in sun and shade, a collector's garden of evergreens and dwarf conifers and a garden lover's answer to deep shade and hilly terrain." The Hill Street garden is described as "an estate garden in the city."

A group is forming to maintain the gardens at the Museum. Would you enjoy doing some gardening this summer? Please call WCHS at 662-9092 or Karen O'Neal, 665-2242.

COMMITTEE NAMES NOMINEES FOR 1993-94

Patricia Austin has been nominated for WCHS president for 1993-94, Arthur French, nominations committee chairman, announced.

Susan Wineberg has been nominated for vice-president, Judy Chrisman for recording secretary, Patty Creal, treasurer, and Louisa Pieper, corresponding secretary. Pauline Walters will be immediate past-president

Nominees to the Board are French, Nancy McKinney, A.P. Marshall, Karen O'Neal and Peter Rocco. Four positions are to be filled for 1993-96. Nominations to any of the above positions may be made from the floor. All directors-at-large are appointed by the president, with board approval, to two year terms.

Bets Hansen and Rosemarion Blake served with French on the nominating committee.

Mrs. Austin previously headed the Society 1982-84 and 1987-88.

ONE-ROOM SCHOOL FOCUS OF MAY 14 CONFERENCE

An inaugural one-room schoolhouse conference is set Friday, May 14, at Eastern Michigan University's McKenny Student Union, co-sponsored by the EMU College of Education and the Historical Society of Michigan.

The 1895 Townhall School from Pittsfield Township was moved to EMU a few years ago and is being restored. Lectures and tours of that school are on the agenda with sessions on preservation and history of the schools. Dr. W. Scott Westerman, Jr., dean emeritus of the EMU School of Education will be keynote speaker.

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

(continued from page 1)

profit section of the Art Fair on East Liberty between Division and Fifth Avenue.

Two persons are needed at the booth for three-hour tours-of-duty between 8:30 a.m. and 9:00 p.m. Wednesday through Friday and until 5:00 p.m. on Saturday.

Please use the coupon from last month's *Impressions* to sign up for any of these activities, or just write or phone.

This is my last column as president of the WCHS. I will remain on the board as immediate past president and will be pleased to continue to work for the completion of the Museum on Main Street.

I have truly enjoyed my past association with the Society and will continue to lend my computer skills to maintain the Society's membership and mailing databases; and I want to thank the board members for their many hours and years of support and contributions.

Pauline V. Walters
662-9092

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WASHTENAW COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

ANNUAL MEETING, POTLUCK DINNER

6:15 P.M. • Wednesday May 19, 1993

Cobblestone Farm Barn
2781 Packard Road
Ann Arbor, Michigan

WASHTENAW COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
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